Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

The Temples of the Cross, of the Foliated Cross and of the Sun at Palenque. By CHARLES P. BOWDITCH. Cambridge, Mass.: University Press, 1906. 8°, 18 pp. Privately printed.

The inscriptions on the three temples mentioned in the title have received more attention on the part of students of Central American archeology probably than any other monumental inscriptions of the Mayas. The length of the texts, their excellent preservation, the beauty of the sculpture both in the hieroglyphics and the figures that accompany them, and the conspicuous care, one might say reverence, with which they were guarded by the ancient Mayas, each in a separate sanctuary, are all calculated to rouse a large measure of curiosity concerning them. This interest cannot fail to be increased when one comes to examine the texts carefully, and yet though the ablest students of Maya literature have been at great pains over them they have proved unusually baffling. In the first place the initial series in two cases is written not in the normal glyphs but entirely in the much more difficult face glyphs, and in the third case the numbers attached to the period glyphs (and this is where the real difficulty comes in) are written in face glyphs. Another curious circumstance is that the dates on all three seem to be much more remote than most other dates recorded on the Maya monuments. Not only this, but it has been shown that the three dates are only a few days apart and that moreover the three inscriptions present a very close parallel throughout.

In the latest contribution to this interesting subject Mr Bowditch begins by accepting the interpretation of the initial series given by Goodman in all three cases, supporting this interpretation by three independent methods: first, by comparison of the face glyphs with others of known value; second, by process of elimination, and, third, by computation of the counts running through the inscriptions. Taking the three dates as thus established, the author then asks what meaning shall be given them. Are they mythical? Are they historical?

"I was at one time inclined to assign a mythical meaning to them, as such a length of time had passed from these dates to Cycle 9, in which most of the Initial and other dates are recorded. For instance, from the Initial date of the Temple of the Foliated Cross to the very early date of Stela C (west) of Quirigua, or the still earlier date of Stela 21 of Yaxchilan, there is a lapse of over 2800 years. I do not now think that this lapse of time necessarily carries this date back to a mythical period, though I do not believe that these early dates can be regarded as strictly historical."

After setting forth in detail the very close relation between the three inscriptions, a relation which warrants us in assuming actual identity for the same dates in the three inscriptions, Bowditch decides against their historical character on the ground that the same historical facts would probably not be repeated in this way. We are then asked to consider whether the three inscriptions may not have reference to the calendar in relation to the seasons, and the rest of the paper is concerned with an investigation along this line.

The date on the Temple of the Cross is

1.18.5.3.2 — 9 Ik 15 Ceh;

that on the Temple of the Sun,

1.18.5.3.6 — 13 Cimi 19 Ceh;

and on the Temple of the Foliated Cross,

1.18.5.4.0 — 1 Ahau 13 Mac.

Mr Bowditch is responsible for the statement that these dates correspond to March 8, March 12, and March 26 respectively, and that they therefore cluster round the vernal equinox. This of course would be true if we accept Landa's statement that the year began invariably on July 16, but although Landa is perfectly clear on this point it is difficult to see how this could have been, since the intercalary days were not included in the 52 year count and could not be adjusted to the long count. All the dates are within a few days of 1.18.5.4.0 — 1 Ahau 13 Mac, and the reason why that particular date was selected is explained in the following way: it was the vernal equinox according to the calendar, which however had got in advance of the season by reason of the omitted intercalary days. If, now, the Mayas reckoned 25 intercalary days to every period of 104 years (a very accurate reckoning), the number of intercalary days accruing at this date from the beginning of the Great Cycle in which the date falls would be 182.5 days, or exactly half a year, and therefore it was a convenient time to make the calendar correspond to the season, which was the autumnal equinox instead of the vernal equinox. In the Temple of the Sun are found two glyphs which have the appearance of relating to the division of the seasons.

The most striking evidence offered in favor of the idea that these inscriptions deal with the count of intercalary days is that adduced from the Temple of the Foliated Cross where the distance number 1.14.14.0, found in the text of the inscription, is the exact number of intercalary days, according to the method already explained, that would be required for the period 10.2.0.0.0.0 — that is to say, Cycle 2 of Great Cycle 10. The date 2 Ahau 3 Uayeb is declared in the same text to be Cycle 2, and the number 1.14.14.0 is the distance from the initial date, 1 Ahau 13 Mac, to 2 Ahau 3 Uayeb. If therefore the Mayas reckoned 10 Great Cycles from the beginning of time, and had passed 2 Cycles besides, to 2 Ahau 3 Uayeb, without correcting the calendar for intercalary days, they would have to go back 1.14.14.0 days to 1 Ahau 13 Mac and count the intervening days in the calendar over again in order to bring the seasons and the calendar into accord.

The conclusions to which the matter presented in Mr Bowditch's paper would seem to lead and to which the author stands committed are as follows:

1. That the three inscriptions have reference to the calendar in its relation to the seasons.

2. That the Mayas calculated 25 intercalary days for each 104 years.

3. That they reckoned ten Great Cycles of 13 Cycles each from the beginning of time, and time began (in as far as they were concerned with it in their calendar) on 4 Ahau 8 Xul, and not on 4 Ahau 13 Yax as supposed by Goodman.

After a careful examination of all the evidence presented it seems difficult to escape the first of these conclusions; and if we accept the first we are bound to accept the other two, for the first is reached chiefly through these.

The objections which present themselves are, first in regard to the difficulty in reconciling the statement that the year began July 16 with the form and structure of the calendar. If the beginning of the year was not fixed, but shifting, as it would be if the intercalary days were not counted (and we know that they were not, either in the 52 year period or in the long count), then the reason offered for the choice of the date 1.18.5.4.0 loses its force. Moreover it would seem as if the Maya priests were sufficiently skilful in their calculations to fix the equinoxial dates correctly. If these three dates that fall so closely together represent the observations of three separate priests regarding the date on which the days and nights became equal, they would seem to have been less successful in this than in other matters relating to the movements of the heavenly bodies. Again if the Mayas who built these temples were living in Cycle 9, as appears to have been the case, why should they want to correct the calendar for Cycle 2? It has not been shown that there is anything in these inscriptions indicating that they brought the intercalary reckoning down to their own time. Still the evidence presented remains for the greater part unaffected by these objections, and when we return to the main conclusions they seem well supported.

G. B. GORDON.